



MAYOR DEKE COPENHAVER

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Press Release

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Re: Mayor Copenhaver's Radio Show 'Augusta Today and Tomorrow'

Mayor Copenhaver, through the generosity of Radio One, is hosting his own monthly interview show. The fifth show was taped today and will be broadcast Sunday, June 25 on:

6:00 am Magic 96.9

7:00 am Foxie 103.1

5:30 pm WTHB FM 100.9

This month's guest was Sandra E. Wimberly, Health Educator with the Richmond County Health Department, who provides community education on sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, Infection Control and other health concerns. As a HIV Counselor, Ms. Wimberly performs prevention counseling and is an HIV/AIDS Prevention Course Instructor.

Ms. Wimberly's responsibilities have become her passion. There are 1,577 reported cases of AIDS in our 13 county area with 80% of those infected being African Americans. According to Ms. Wimberly, the stigma and discrimination attached to HIV has created a situation where many individuals are afraid to be tested. Ms. Wimberly pointed out the fact that at many Healthcare fairs, people

are willing to get their blood pressure checked and their glucose levels, but HIV tests scare them. Tuesday, June 27th is National HIV Awareness Day. Two seminars will be hosted by Abbott Virology on that day. People can come and learn more about HIV and HIV testing. Both the Mayor and Ms. Wimberly actively encouraged everyone to get tested and the Board of Health is offering free passes for testing.

Mayor Copenhaver and Ms. Wimberly are both actively involved with the restructuring of the Ryan White Care Act in order for cities of Augusta's size to be more accurately represented in federal funding levels. Both stressed the importance of accuracy in reporting cases with regards to ensuring that proportionate federal funding is allocated to Augusta. As the face of AIDS has changed over the years, rapidly shifting from an urban white, gay male disease to a rural disease affecting an increasing number of African-Americans, federal funding is still disproportionately focused on larger metropolitan areas.

Ms. Wimberly stated that she advocates to "Talk, fight, educate and get tested" as the best way to address the disease. "We need to educate our children. Abstinence is the only sure way to avoid HIV, but is not always realistic and we must educate our youth early." stated Ms. Wimberly.

The show closed with a discussion of Mrs. Wimberly's strong faith and how it impacts her work on a daily basis. "I've got to keep the faith because that's what keeps me strong". In closing, both agreed Augusta has a strong and abundant supply of people who are willing to stand up to make a difference.

For more information on HIV and HIV testing, please contact Ms. Wimberly at 706.667.4342.